

## Utopias and Dystopias: Definition and Characteristics from ReadWriteThink.org

U  
"good"  
or  
"no"

**Utopia:** A place, state, or condition that is ideally perfect in respect of politics, laws, customs, and conditions.

### Characteristics of a Utopian Society

- Information, independent thought, and freedom are promoted.
- A figurehead or concept brings the citizens of the society together, but not treated as singular.
- Citizens are truly free to think independently.
- Citizens have no fear of the outside world.
- Citizens live in a harmonious state.
- The natural world is embraced and revered.
- Citizens embrace social and moral ideals. Individuality and innovation are welcomed.
- The society evolves with change to make a perfect utopian world.

### Types of Utopian Ideas

Most utopian works present a world in which societal ideals and the common good of society are maintained through one or more of the following types of beliefs:

- Economic ideas: Money is abolished. Citizens only do work that they enjoy.
- Governing ideas: Society is controlled by citizenry in a largely individualist, communal, social and sometimes libertarian "government". The term government is used loosely, as power is seen to corrupt, so constructed government systems are warned against.
- Technological ideas: In some cases, technology may be embraced to enhance the human living experience and make human life easier and more convenient. Other ideas propose that technology drives a wedge between humanity and nature, therefore becoming an evil to society.
- Ecological ideas: Back to the nature, humans live harmoniously with nature and reverse the effects of industrialization.
- Philosophical/religious ideas: Society believes in a common religious philosophy, some fashion their surroundings around the biblical Garden of Eden. In inter-religious utopias, all ideas of God are welcomed. In intra-religious utopias, a singular idea of God is accepted and practiced by all citizens.

### The Utopian Protagonist

- works to promote the ideals of society.
- questions the existing social and political systems with the aim to bring positive change.
- believes or feels that the society in which he or she lives is always getting better.
- helps the audience recognize the positive aspects of the utopian world through his or her perspective.